What's new about MIS in Sub-Saharan Africa ?

An overview of MIS evolution

CIRAD, INRA, MSU

J.Rakotoson, H. David-Benz, J. Egg,
F.Galtier, A. Kizito, YY.Shen

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CONTEXT

80’s – 90’s : 2 decades of fast development of MIS, in a context of market liberalization

But the results appear disappointing (Bowbrick, 1988 ; Shepherd, 1997 ; Egg et Galtier 1998 et 2003) :

- Information disseminated doesn't meet stockholders needs
- Financially unsustainable
- Lack of M&E tools and lack of reactivity
- Market functioning and specificities are not considered

A new generation of MIS emerge in 2000’s, in a changing environment : NTIC, strengthening of farmers organizations, regional integration policies

OBJECTIVES and METHODS

Objective : what are the main evolutions and innovations in today's MIS ?

Sources

- SIM inventory (77 MIS data base - 66% Africa, 18% Asia, Lat. Am. 11%, Caribbean 4%, World 1%)
- Email survey (identification, main features, evolution, constraints/solutions)
- Several reminders and revisions

  => 31 “clean” answers (mostly Africa : 94%)
- Additional information from literature and web

Limitations

- Mostly descriptive (no indications about effectiveness of the services provided)

- **Preliminary results** (some filled in questionnaires received mid-March)

Methods

- Evolution of the first generation of MIS (“1G”: 80’s & 90’s): comparing their beginning / today’s situation

  (“1G” terminology will be kept here to avoid confusion, even if they have integrated many innovations)

- Main features & innovations in today’s MIS :

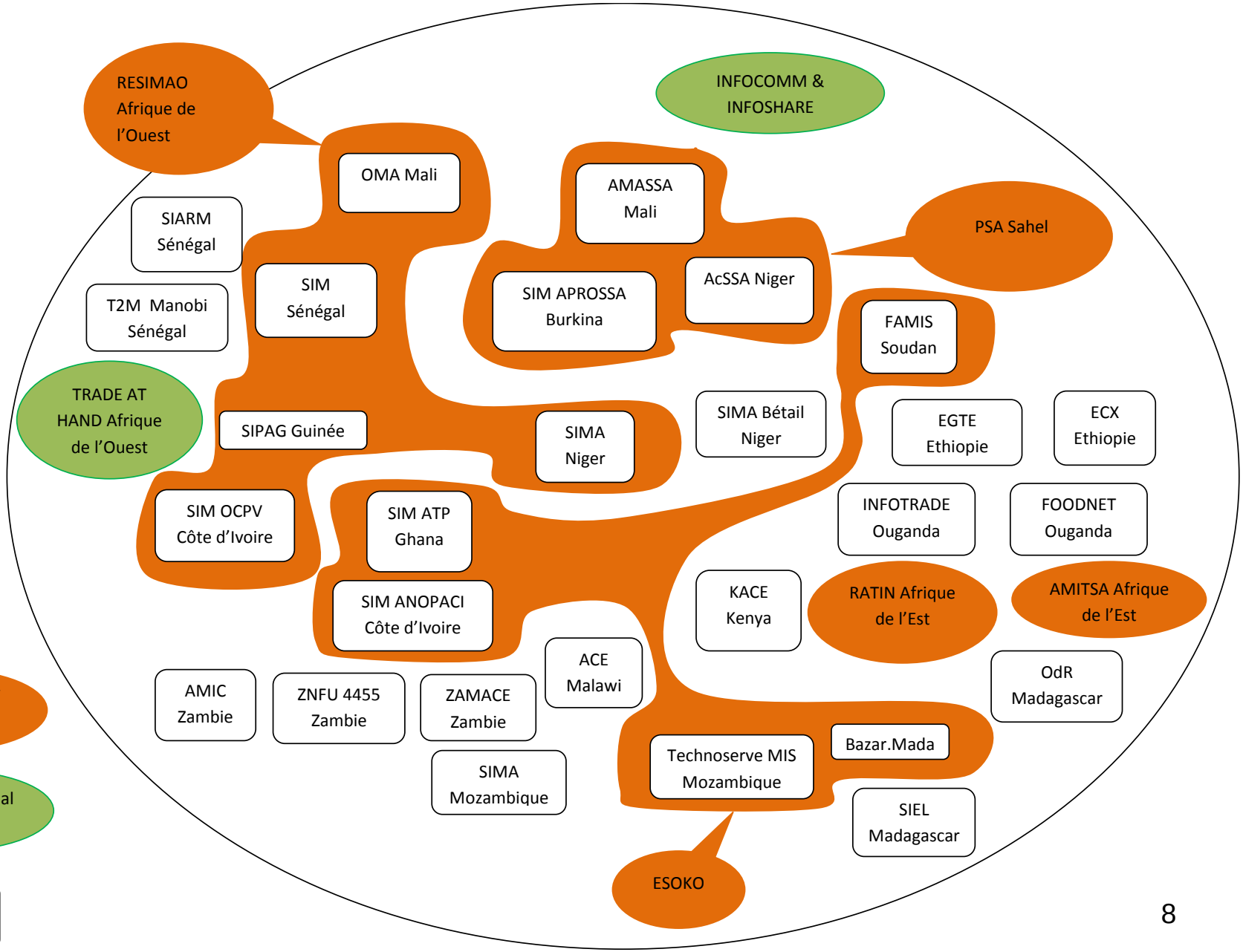
  comparing “1G” today / recent MIS (“2G” : 2000’s)

« artificial » chronological limit in 2000 ?

- necessity to set a limit to analyze evolution
- relevant considering changes in the environment (1st SIM using Internet and mobile phone, regional integration policies…)
- MIS are influenced by their history

RESULTS

General mapping of MIS in Africa



Légende :

SIM régional / réseau de SIM

SIM international /Plateforme

SIM national

Geographical classification

	1G	2G	Sub-total
National	13	13	26
Supranational	0	5	5

- National MIS are most well spread
- Few supranational : regional, network, World

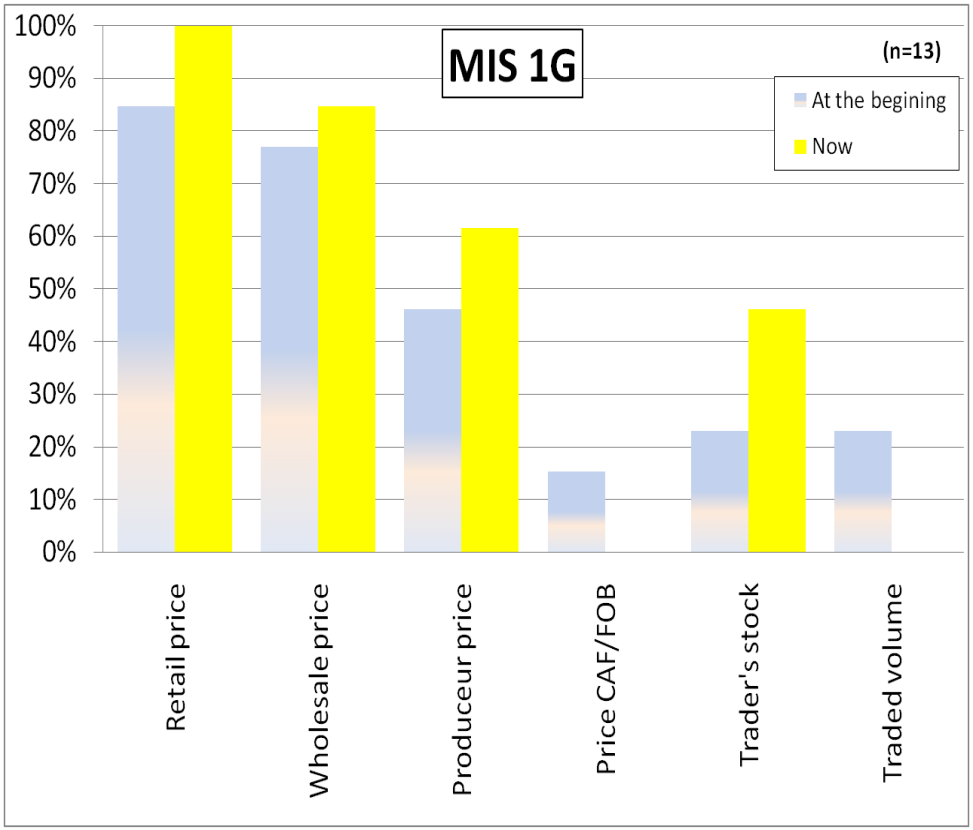
We will focus on national MIS, as supranational ones are too heterogeneous to be analyzed as a single type.

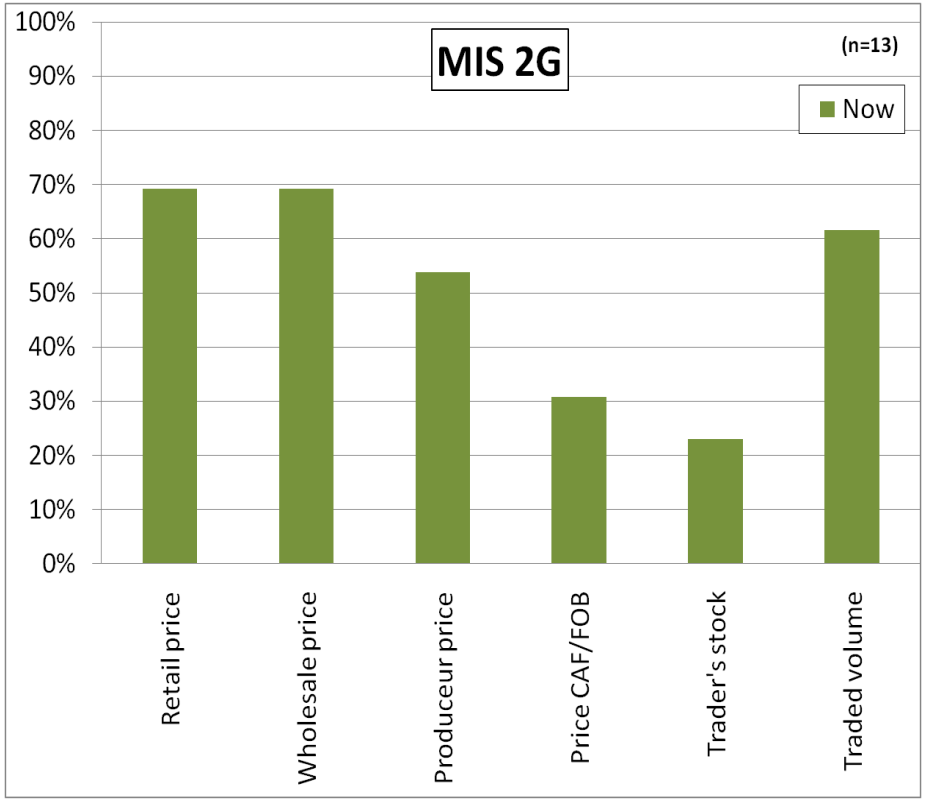
Main features and evolution

Focused on aspects that have been changing significantly (or that are expected to have changed)

- Information collected and sources
- Internal transmission and users diffusion
- Other services provided
- Monitoring and feed-back
- Institutional home
- Funding

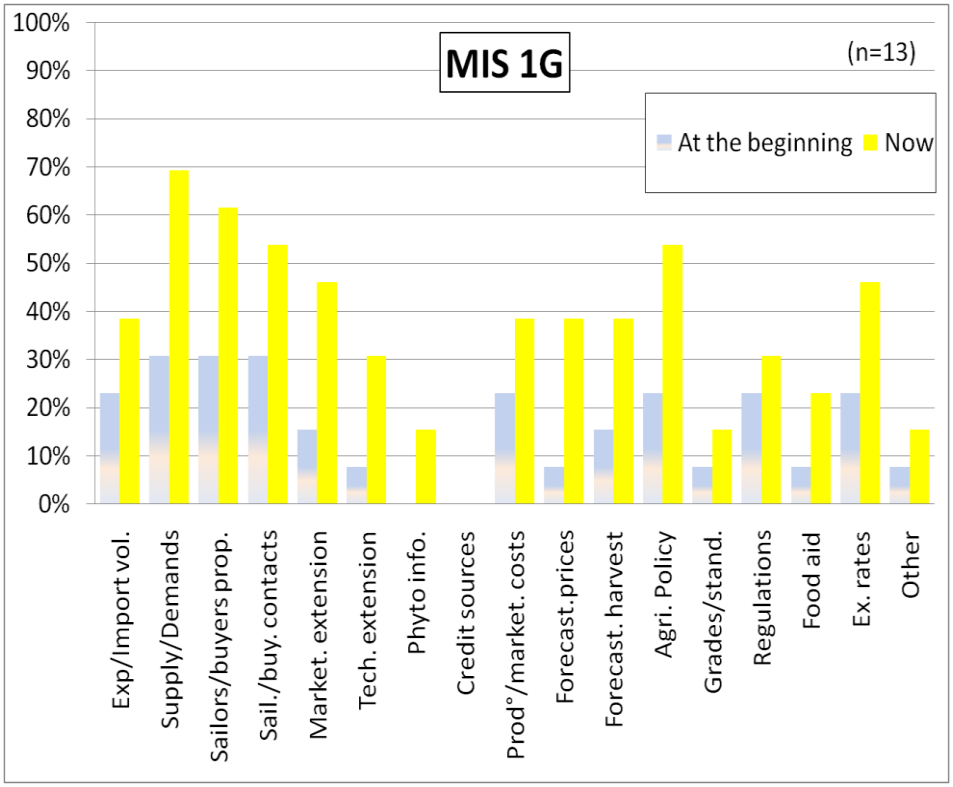
Essential information collected (price & volume)

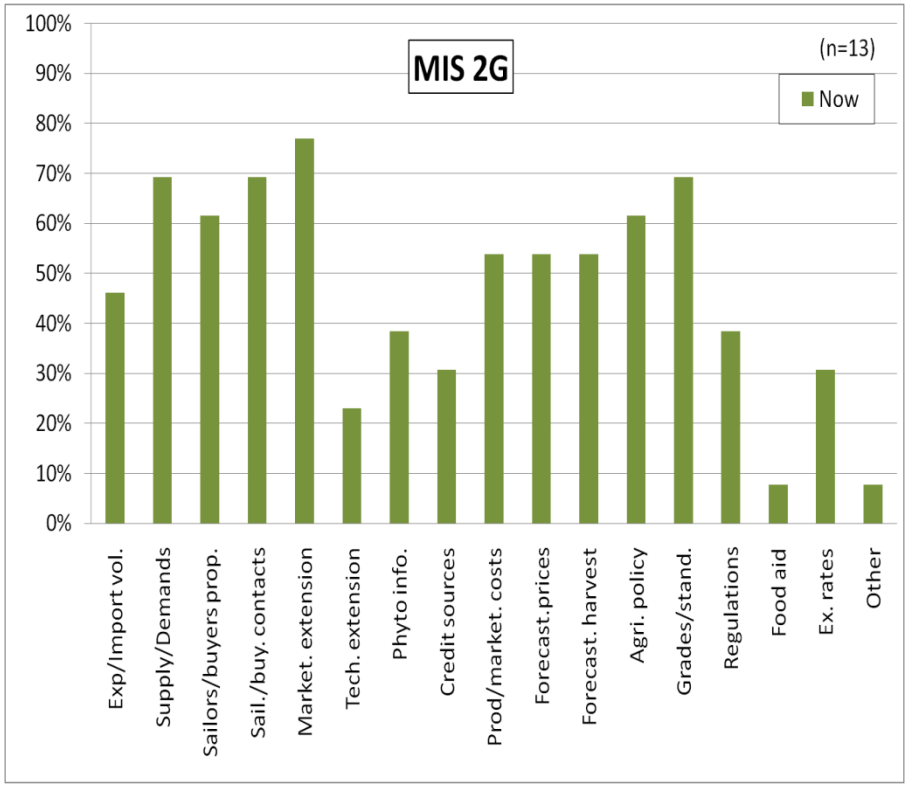




- 1G have extended the scope of prices and volumes collected. More attention now on traded volume and stocks.
- 2 G appear more selective on the level of prices, and are interested on volume as well.

Other information collected



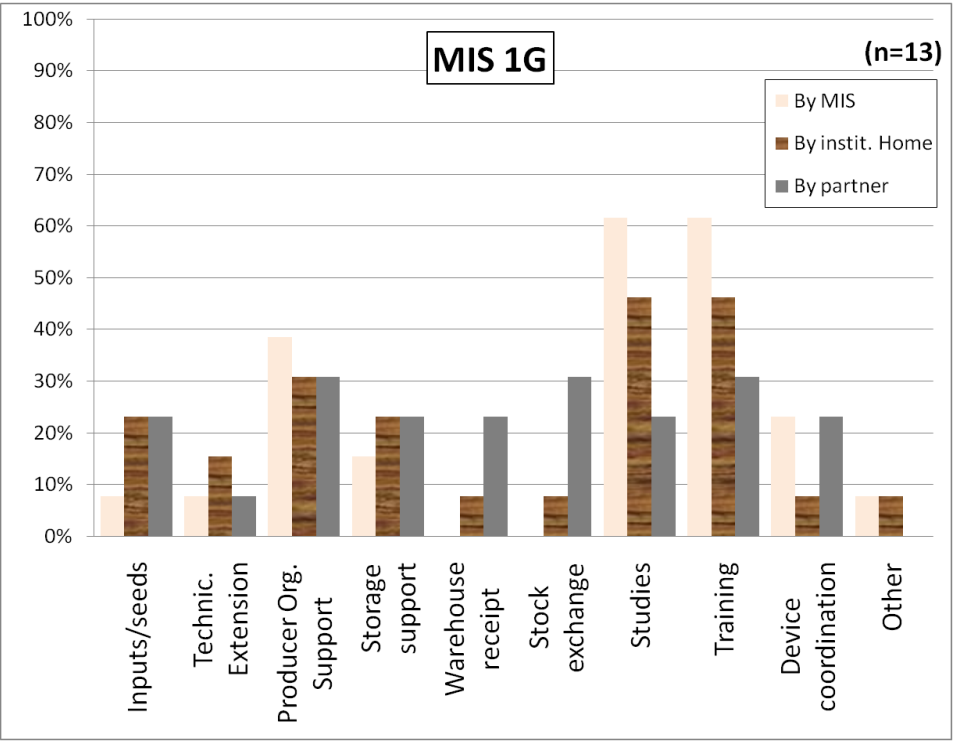


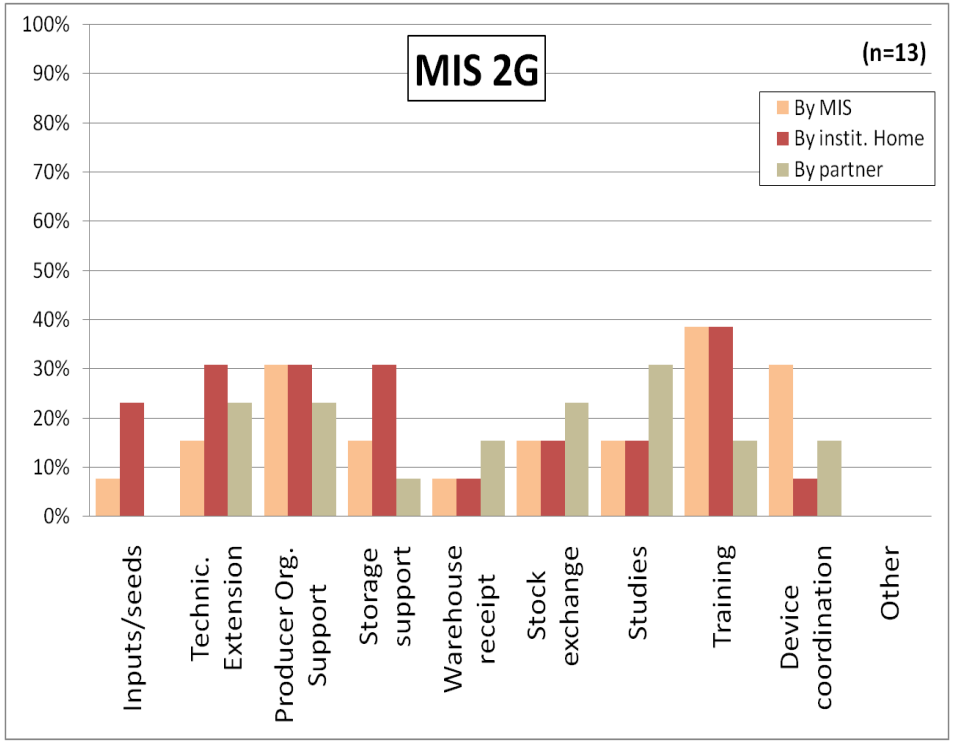
- 1G : strong diversification of information collected (supply/demand, extension – production & market, costs, prevision of harvest and prices, policies…)

- Today strong heterogeneity among all the MIS (2 to 18 « other info. » collected). No clearly related to an other parameter.

Other service provided

Today



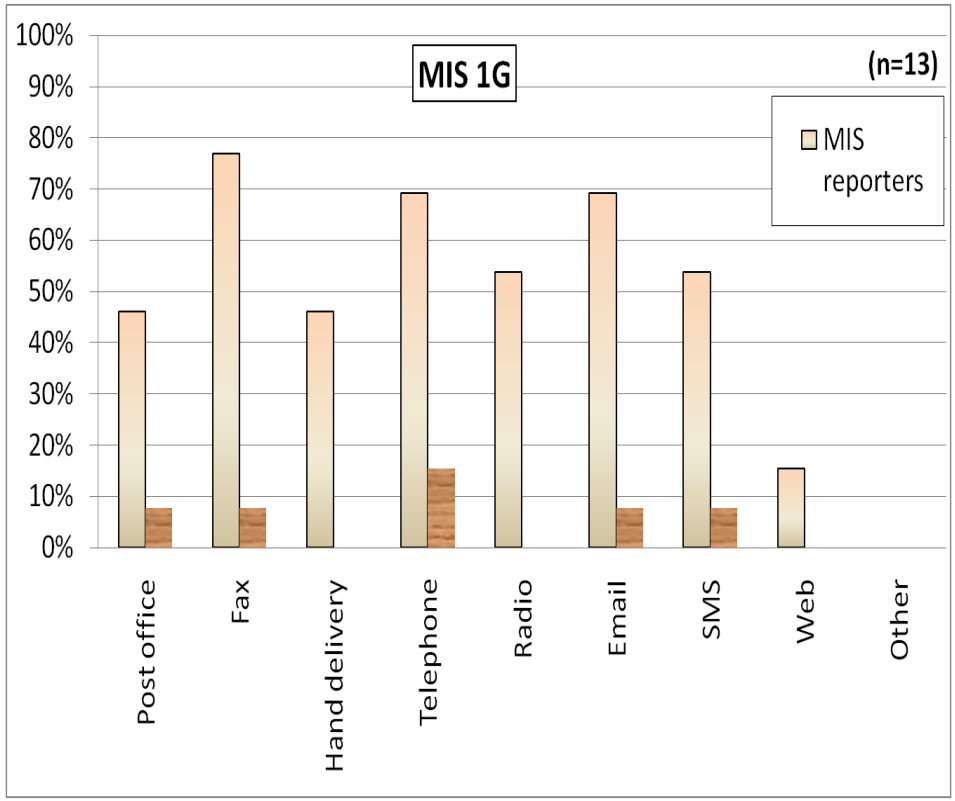


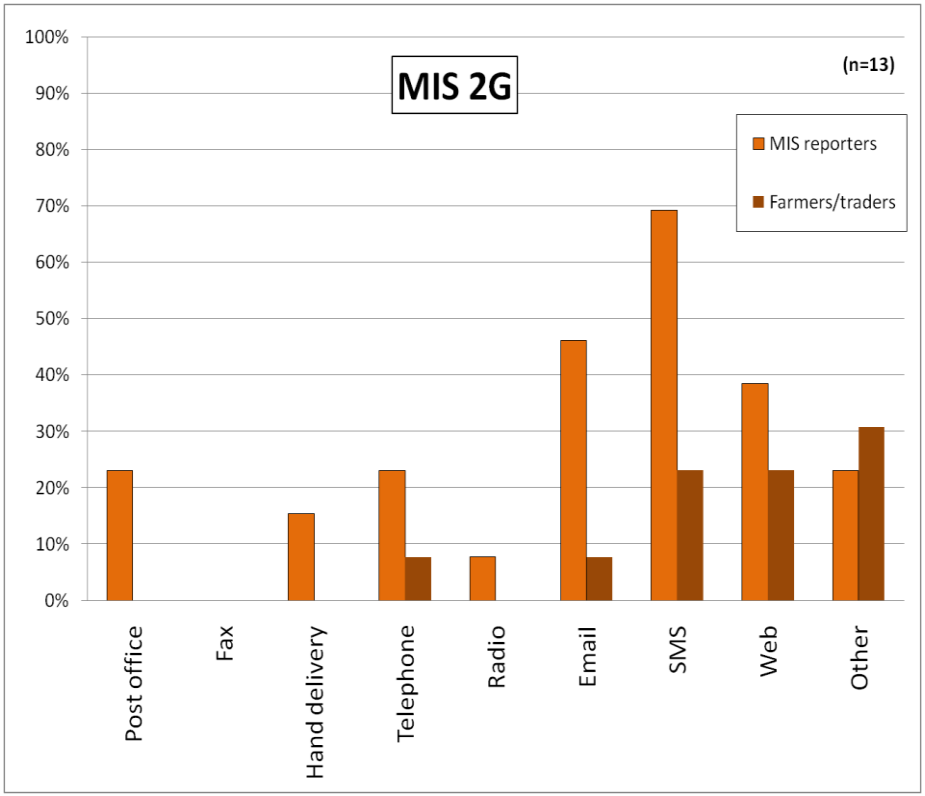
- SIM provide today a limited number of services (apart from information). Mostly related to training and extension.

- Studies appear a specificity of 1G.

Sources and modes of internal transmission

Today



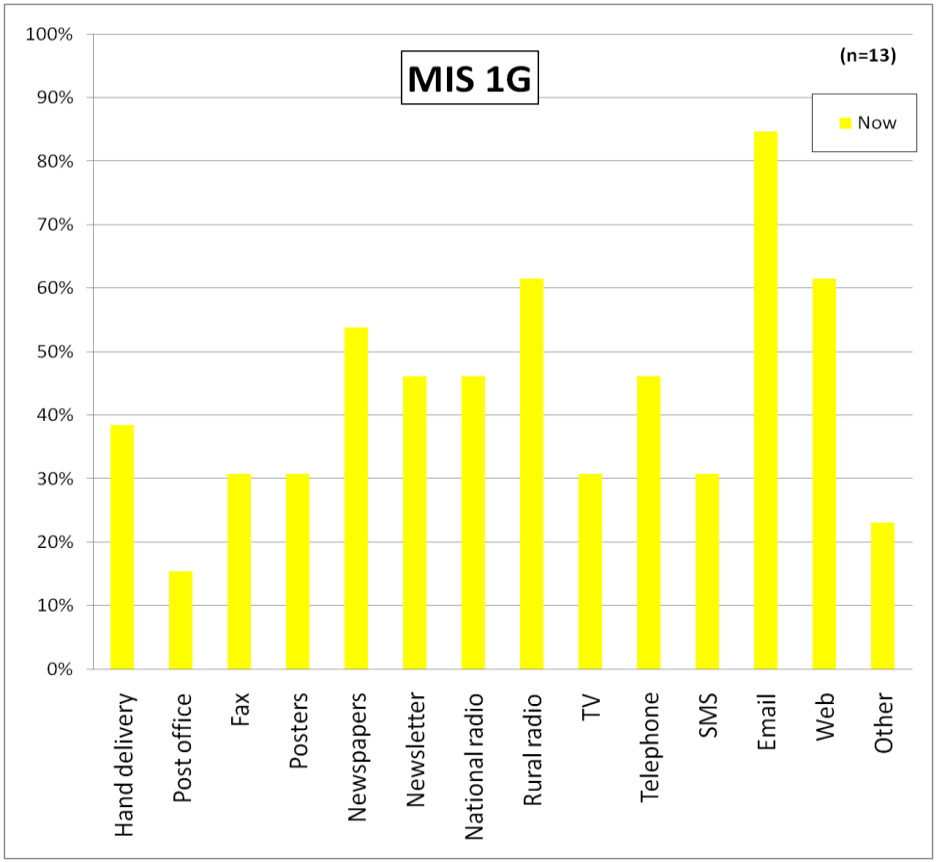


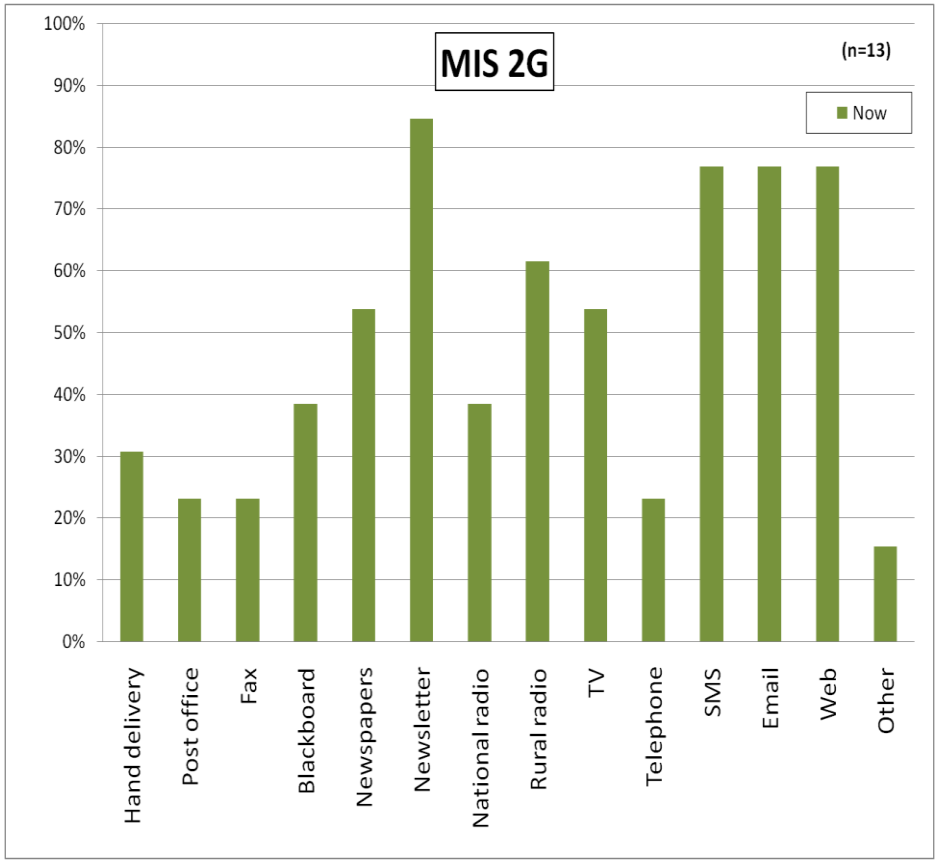
- Most 1G have integrated NTIC (email - SMS), but still use classical media of transmission (fax, phone, hand delivery, postal, radio).

- 2G rely mostly on NTIC, more specifically on SMS (seldom on traditionnal media)

Modes of diffusion

Today



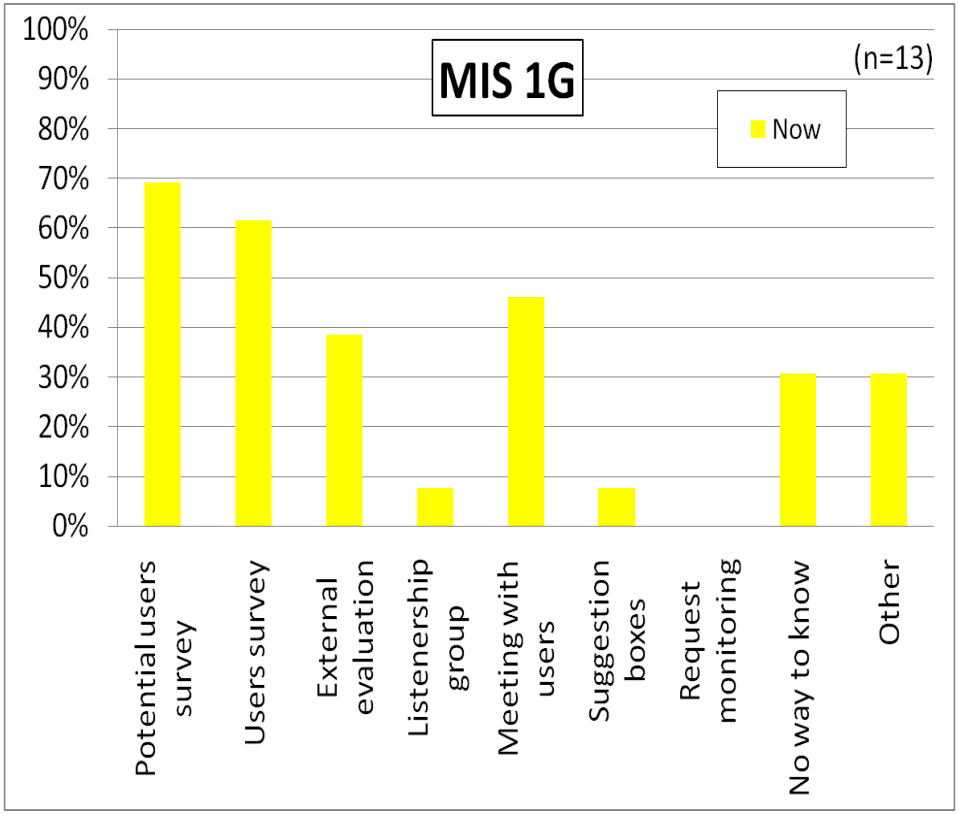


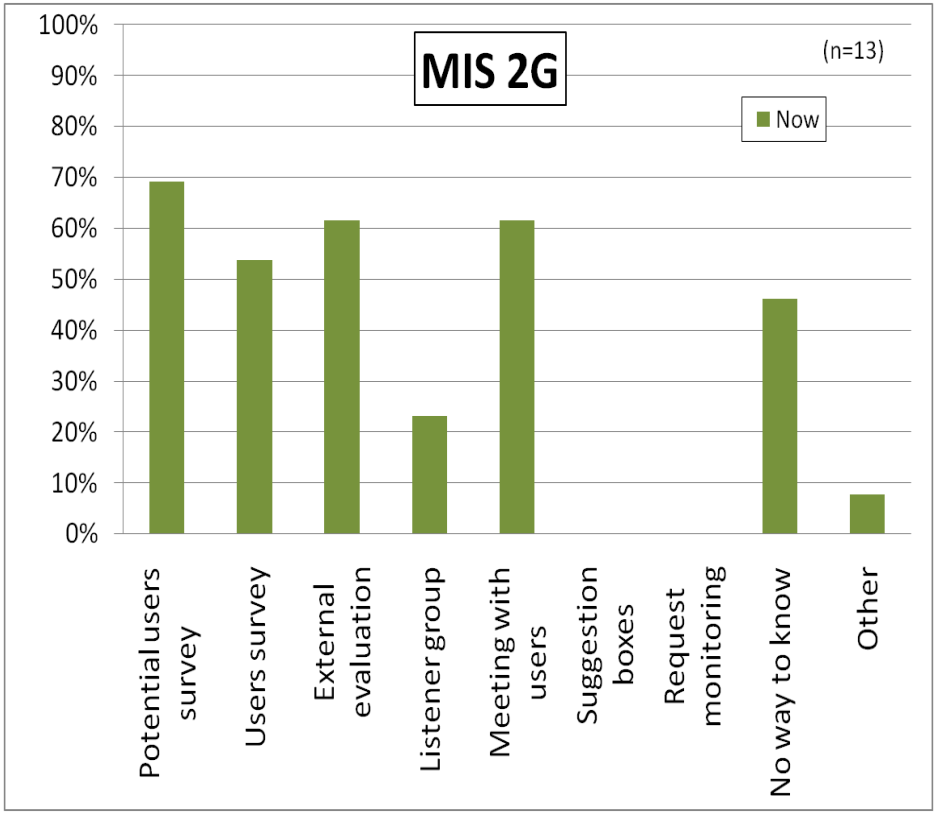
Diversified means:

- Email and Web are generalized
- SMS well spread among 2G but much less among 1G
- NTIC are note excluding more traditional : large scale dissemination means (radio) and analytical media (news-letter, news papers) in both categories of MIS

SE & feed-back

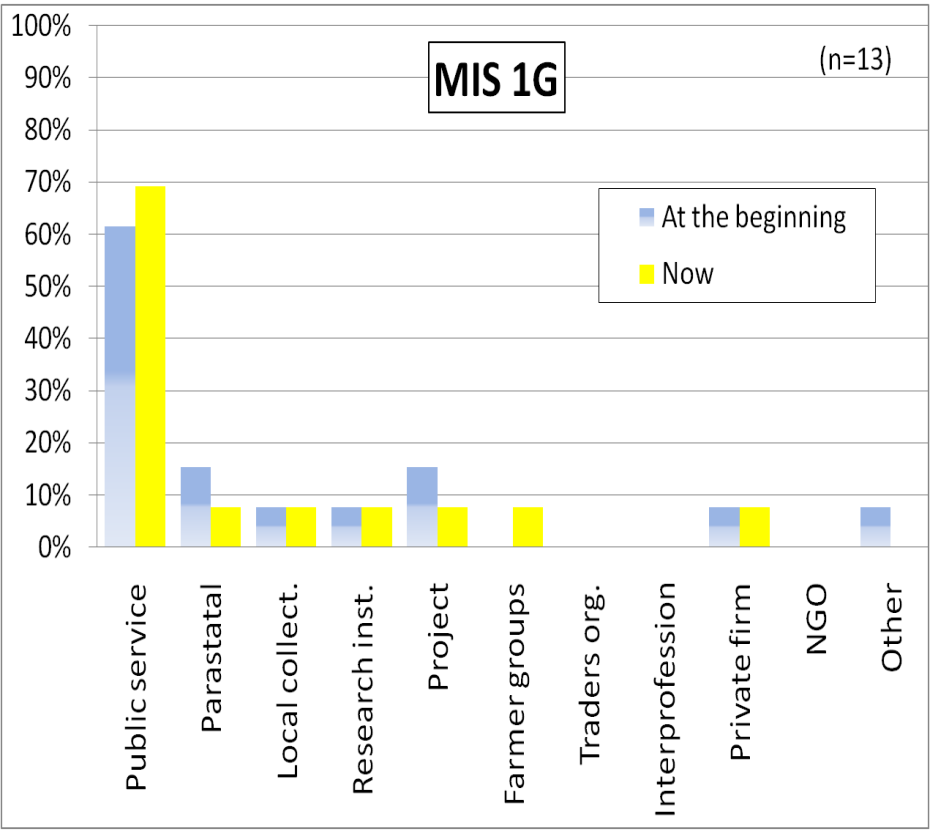
Today

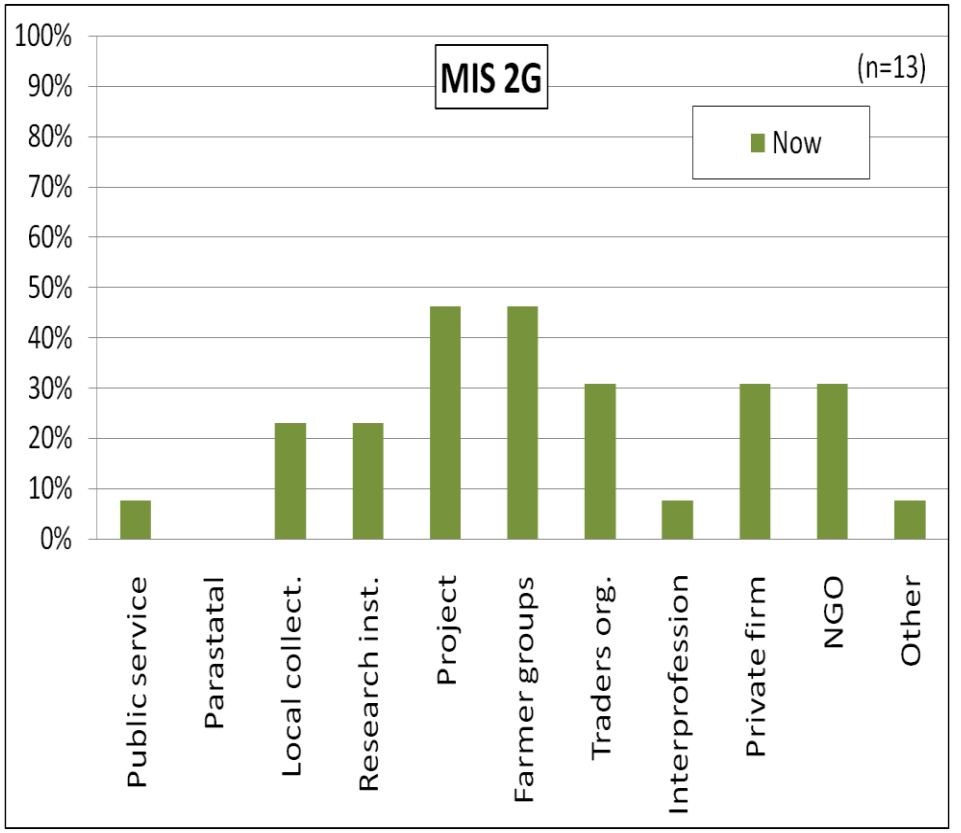




- Large panel of SE and feed-back tools
- No significant difference between 1G and 2G
- But no ex-post analysis of actual requests

Institutional home

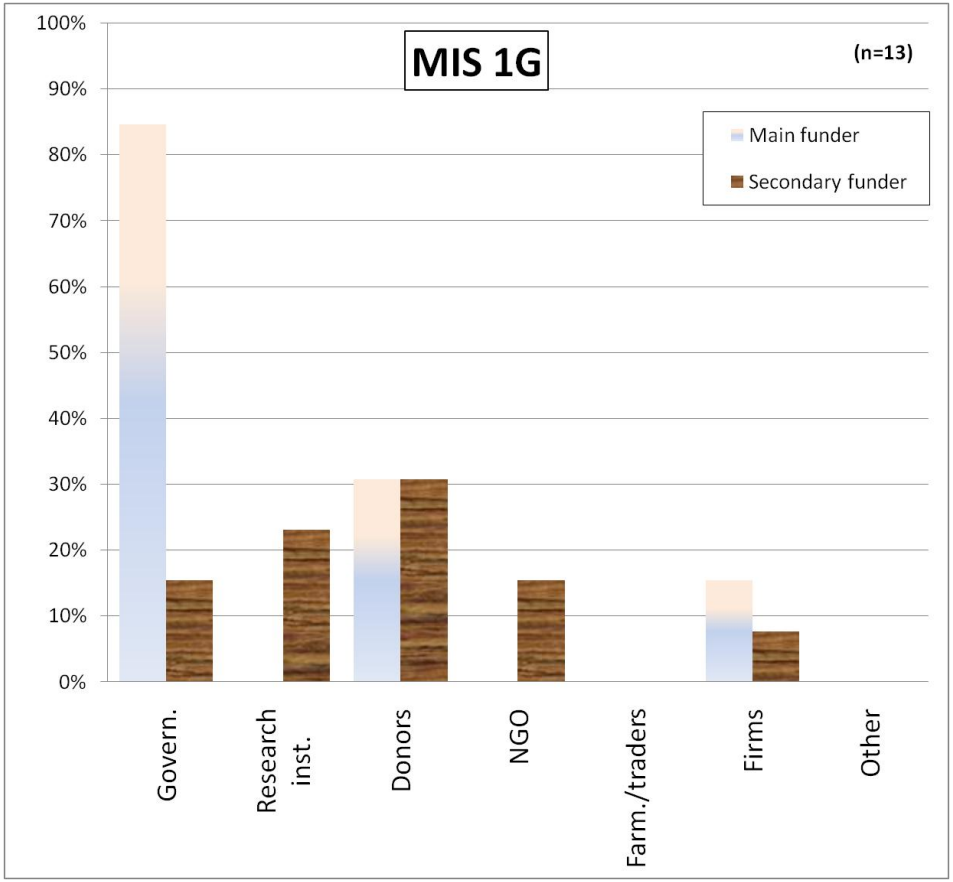


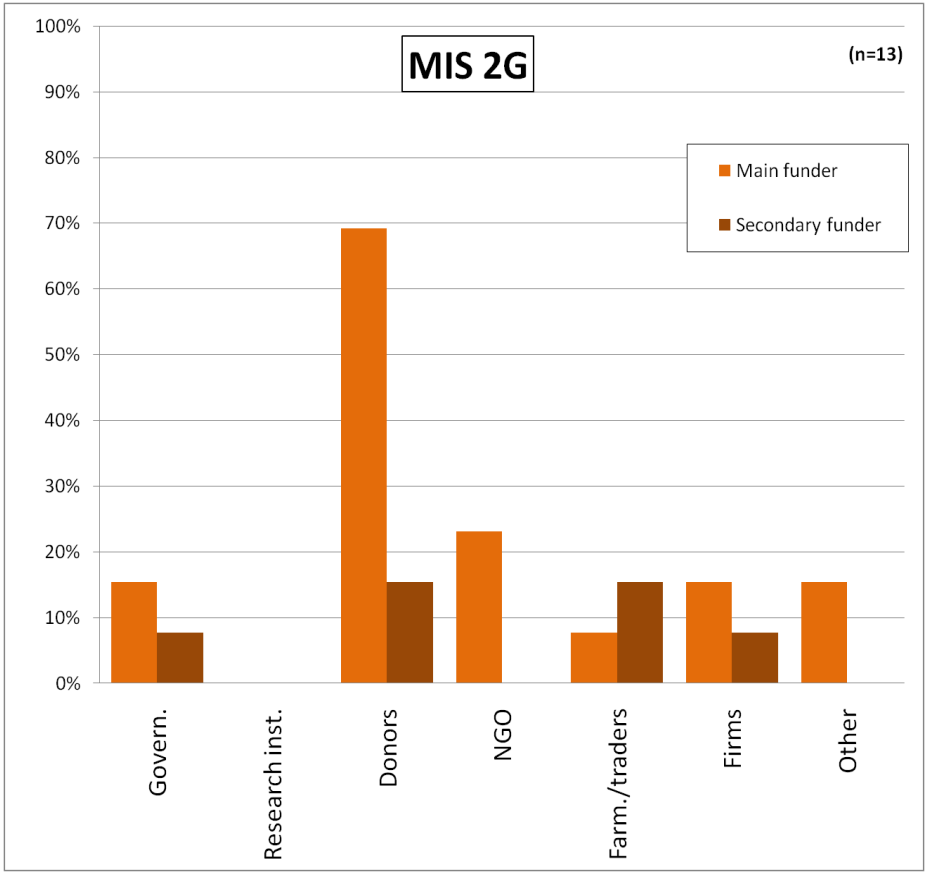


- 1G : public sector home remains largely dominant

- 2 G : almost no public home.
  Large diversity (projects and NGOs, farmers/traders organizations, private firms)
  Several mixed institutional home is common

Funding
Today





- 1G : public largely dominant and limited contribution of donors (previously funded by project related to liberalization, they are now included in government budget)
- 2G : rely mostly on donors (new SIM, benefiting from renewal of interest towards MIS). Some (very marginal) contribution of users.

Discussion

What can be expected from these innovations ?

(in term of potential to improve efficiency)

	Limits of 1G MIS	Indicators of (potentiel) improvement of performances
1	Lack of reliability and utility of the information provided	Modes of diffusion (utility) Information collected (utility) Modes of infernal transmission (reliability) Quality control (reliability)
2	Lack of tools / methods of monitoring and evaluation	Feed-back devices (monitoring + adjustment capacity)
3	Lack of adjustment capacity (administrative management)	Institutional home (incentive to match users needs)
4	Problem of durability (project funded)	Funding (durability)
5	Market functioning insufficiently considered	Other services (respond to non informational constraints)

1.1. Meet stakeholders needs (frequency, accessibility, diversity)

- Real improvement in transmission technologies. Updated ITCs, along with traditional media (radio)
- A major innovation using SMS : interactivity (the user chooses the information he needs)

⇨ Adequate tools to (potentially) transmit a targeted information, at a fast speed, when requested, as well as a mass dissemination at very low cost

1.2. Reliability

- The use of NITCs reduces the risk of errors due to internal transmission.
- Different methods to control the quality of information
- But, risk of voluntarily bias information, in case of contribution of the users to provide information to the MIS.

2. Feed-back, monitoring

- Different monitoring and feed-back are used (including involving users)
- But lack of real impact evaluation

3. Reactivity

Less administration management, more involvement of farmers' organizations and private sector ; should provide more incentives to meet the users expectations

4 . Sustainability

The issue is not solved (recent MIS are mostly financed by donors or foundations ; users contribution is still marginal)

5. Taking into consideration market conduct

- Very heterogeneous.
- The most multi-services integrated are projects (but not sustainable…)